



November 20, 1981

TO BE PUBLISHED ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 30, 1981

PUBLIC NOTICE
NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT DIVISION
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission Regulations, the following proposed discharge plans have been submitted for approval to the Director of the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division, Post Office Box 968, Crown Building, 725 St. Michael's Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503; telephone (505) 827-5271.

UNITED NUCLEAR CORPORATION, UNC Mining and Milling Division, Post Office Drawer QQ, Gallup, New Mexico 87301 has requested an extension beyond January 31, 1981 for continuation of their previously approved discharge plan (DP-63) sand backfill operation at the Northeast Church Rock Uranium Mine (NECR). The volume proposed to be discharged is unchanged from the previously approved volume, an average of 12,000 tons per month. UNC, since November, 1979, has been discharging uranium mill tailings sands into abandoned mine workings where roof support is needed. A high percentage of coarse sand is obtained by utilization of a cyclone at the tailings impoundment for separation of the coarse fraction and slimes. The slurry which is deposited underground consists of tailings sand mixture of 65% solids, having a total dissolved solids content of approximately 8,845 mg/l. Current and proposed backfilling operations at NECR uranium mine are located in T16N, R16W, Section 2, McKinley County, New Mexico. Conventional mine drainage water will be used to form the 65% solid to water slurry for pumping into the NECR uranium mine. After emplacement of the tailings, the slurry water will commingle with mine water and will be pumped out of the mine into treatment ponds. The currently approved and proposed discharge occurs within the Westwater Formation, a water bearing unit. Therefore, the ground water most likely to be affected is the Westwater Canyon Member of the Morrison Formation located at a depth of approximately 1,700 feet, and having a total dissolved solids concentration of approximately 250 mg/l.

Any interested person may obtain further information from the Ground Water Section, Water Pollution Control Bureau, EID, and may submit written comments to the Director of the EID at the address given above. Prior to ruling on any proposed discharge plan or its modification, the Director of EID will allow thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this Notice during which comments may be submitted to him and a public hearing may be requested by any interested person. Requests for a public hearing shall set forth the reasons why the hearing should be held. A hearing will be held if the Director determines that there is a significant public interest.



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